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The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The situation in Central America

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/176 of 18 December 1997. It covers developments relating to progress achieved by Central American countries in the areas of peace, freedom, democracy and development since my last report, dated 11 September 1997 (A/52/344), was submitted to the General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly has discussed the situation in Central America since 1983. With the signing, on 7 August 1987, of the agreement known as Esquipulas II (A/42/521-S/19085, annex), the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua undertook to initiate processes of democratization and national dialogue in their countries, to bring about ceasefires and promote free and fair elections. In February 1989, the Presidents called upon the United Nations to become involved in the verification of those agreements. Since that time, the Organization has encouraged and assisted Central American countries in the steps taken to consolidate their progress towards peace, freedom, democracy and development.

3. Two important peacekeeping missions have been carried out in Central America under the authority of the Security Council: the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) (November 1989–January 1992) and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) (July 1991–April 1995). By its resolution 1094 (1997) of 20 January 1997, the Security Council also authorized the attachment to the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) of a group of military observers to verify the demobilization of combatants of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) (March–May 1997).

4. For its part, the General Assembly authorized the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN) (August 1989–April 1990) and, on 19 September 1994, adopted resolution 48/267, establishing MINUGUA. After Guatemala's Firm and Lasting Peace was signed on 29 December 1996 (A/51/796-S/1997/114, annex II), the General Assembly authorized, by resolution 51/198 B of 27 March 1997, the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA, thereafter known as the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, and to expand its mandate to verify all the peace accords. Meanwhile, following the completion of the mandate of ONUSAL, a smaller Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL) was established on 1 May 1995; MINUSAL

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was in turn replaced on 1 May 1996 by the United Nations Office of Verification in El Salvador (ONUV), which, pursuant to resolution 51/199 A of 17 December 1996, was further reduced to a support unit from 1 January 1997 until 30 June 1997, and, thereafter, following resolution 51/199 B of 31 July 1997, to a follow-up unit of two international Professionals within the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in El Salvador until 31 December 1997. During 1998, the follow-up unit was further reduced in size and its mandate extended for a final six-month period, as recommended in my letter dated 15 December 1997 to the President of the General Assembly (A/52/731) and authorized by the General Assembly in its decision 436 of 18 December 1997. The follow-up unit's work ended on 30 June 1998. In addition, most programmes and agencies of the United Nations system continue to provide technical assistance to Central America within country programmes or regional frameworks.

5. The present report concentrates on the five signatories to the Esquipulas process; in accordance with the new Central American agenda and the composition of Central American summit meetings, reference is also made to the situation in Panama and in Belize.

II. The Central American process

6. In the eleventh year since the signing of Esquipulas II Agreements which created the framework for the "Procedure for a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America", the countries throughout the region have continued efforts to further enhance the improved prospects for the goals of peace, democratization, reconciliation, development and justice reiterated by their Governments. A desire to enhance these goals through the process of Central American Union was made evident in the joint participation of the Presidents of the Central American countries in the general debate at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, during which, in accordance with the commitments undertaken, they reaffirmed their desire and political will to continue doing their utmost to expedite, gradually and progressively, the Central American Union referred to in the Declaration of Nicaragua of 2 September 1997, as a higher expression of the common association called for in the Tegucigalpa Protocol of 12 December 1991 (A/46/829-S/23310, annex III).

7. Democratically elected Governments have shown themselves to be stable in the face of internal difficulties. Thus, presidential elections were held in Honduras on 30 November 1997 and in Costa Rica on 1 February 1998. In Nicaragua, elections were held peacefully in the Atlantic Coast region on 1 March 1998. Similarly, Guatemala held municipal elections in 30 municipalities on 7 June 1998. Panama continued the process of broadening national consensus around the goal of a successful management of the transfer of the Canal to exclusive Panamanian control after 31 December 1999.

8. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Central America's economic performance improved in 1997.[1] The region's gross domestic product grew by 4 per cent compared to a modest 2.1 per cent rate the year before. The higher growth rate was due in part to renewed dynamism in Costa Rica's economy and the acceleration of growth in El Salvador and Guatemala. The political situation in the region was greatly improved by the signing of the Guatemalan Peace Agreements, which ended the cycle of instability that had for a long time negatively affected social and economic development. Investments were mainly oriented to the tourism sector and the expansion of the "*maquila*" (manufacturing for export) industry. In accordance with regional agreements, most countries gradually reduced their external tariffs, thus stimulating trade in the region. Privatization is currently under way in many sectors. The increased economic activity, coupled with the growth in imports, has also led to growing current account deficits. Despite a general improvement in the region's economy, this did not translate into a parallel decrease in unemployment, an area in which minimal progress was achieved. Several economic sectors, primarily agriculture and the hydroelectric industry, were adversely affected by the El Niño weather phenomenon.

9. Notwithstanding some difficulties, efforts have continued to strengthen democratic institutions and to bring military and public security bodies under the control of civilian authorities. The offices of the ombudsmen for human rights in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have proceeded with their work, which is crucial for the vigilance and accountability of democratic institutions in the area of human rights. However, ombudsmen who attended a regional meeting in April 1998 in Honduras expressed concern regarding a region-wide tendency to limit the role of their offices and decrease their budgets. Honduras has continued the process of demilitarizing public security, creating the position of a civilian Security Minister and recently proposing the appointment of a civilian to take charge of the country's defence. In Guatemala, the constitutional amendments required by the Peace Agreements to limit the role of the armed forces to that of external defence are yet to be approved by Congress. Meanwhile, efforts continue

to strengthen the capacity and deployment of Guatemala's new National Civil Police. However, throughout the region, institutions responsible for public security are confronted with alarming levels of common criminality, which have their origin in the economic and social hardships experienced by a large proportion of the population, combined with difficulties in the process of reintegration of former combatants and those displaced by conflict. In June 1998, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) organized a Forum on Citizen Security in the region to analyse the social and economic causes and costs of violence. The Bank's President expressed his concern that continued crime might seriously undermine economic and social development.

10. In their "Declaration of San Salvador II" (A/49/901-S/1995/396, annex V), the Central American Presidents recognized widespread unemployment, social deterioration and poverty as problems requiring urgent attention. However, the pursuit of policies necessary for macroeconomic stabilization, liberalization of the economy and modernization of the State has done little to advance the alleviation of widespread poverty or the much needed creation of employment. While the risk of social unrest remains real, the fact that incidents of this nature have not been more frequent can be attributed to the region's high level of political organization and, to some extent, to the memories of recent experiences of internal conflict.

Regional cooperation and integration

11. The reporting period has seen the further consolidation of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, an ambitious and comprehensive initiative to promote respect for life, peace, democracy, human rights, ethnic diversity, economic integration and sustainable development which was first established by the Presidents of Central America in 1994 (see A/49/580-S/1994/1217, annex I). Building on subsequent meetings held at Costa del Sol, El Salvador, in October 1995 and the seventeenth presidential summit held at San Pedro Sula, Honduras in December 1995 (A/51/67), the eighteenth presidential summit, held at Montelimar, Nicaragua in May 1996 (A/50/998-S/1996/497) reaffirmed the Alliance and, in particular, emphasized the field of tourism with the adoption of the Programme of Action for the Development of Tourism in Central America (ibid., annex II). As a result of a special presidential summit held in November 1997, the Dominican Republic was also included in the Alliance's framework.

12. At their nineteenth summit, held at Panama City from 10 to 13 July 1997, the Central American Presidents approved a reform of the System of Regional Integration to allow the transition from an intergovernmental system to a community system. The resulting Guidelines for the Strengthening and Rationalization of Regional Institutions, based on a joint ECLAC/IDB report,[2] proposed that the Presidents should meet at least once a year to make strategic and political decisions on integration while a Council of Foreign Ministers would operate as the main decision-making body on the integration of foreign affairs, economy, social affairs and the environment. Other reform proposals were aimed at streamlining the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), the Central American Court of Justice and the Central American Integration System (SICA) and at establishing a regional mechanism to coordinate international cooperation.

13. In September 1997, the Central American Presidents, the Prime Minister of Belize and the Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, met at Managua in an extraordinary session and signed the Declaration of Nicaragua. The Declaration aims to build a Central American Union which will further strengthen regional integration, better harness common efforts towards sustainable development and help to meet the challenges of globalization. It was agreed that a high-level group would be established to prepare the conditions for the creation of the Union. Recent progress in all the above-mentioned issues will be discussed and evaluated at the twentieth presidential summit to be held in Guatemala in November 1998.

14. With regard to territorial disputes in the region, progress appears to have been made on the issue of the land pockets (*bolsones*) along the border between Honduras and El Salvador (most of which were awarded to Honduras by the International Court of Justice in the border dispute in September 1992); thus, on 19 January 1998, the Presidents of Honduras and El Salvador signed an accord agreeing to demarcate the border within a year, and a convention resolving the problems of nationality and property ownership for the border population.[3] Some headway has also been made on the demarcation of the waters of the Gulf of Fonseca (where Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua claim rights), with Nicaragua and Honduras having agreed in March 1998 to better signal their maritime limits. Regarding the disputes over transit on the San Juan River along the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, the countries concerned have consistently emphasized the need to settle their differences through dialogue.

Extraregional cooperation

15. The countries of Central America continue to stress the importance of the role played by the international community in promoting peace, freedom, democracy and development within the region. At a time of pressing demands for international assistance, they urged that this support must be maintained if the progress made in recent years is to be consolidated.

16. Throughout the peace processes of El Salvador and Guatemala, members of the international community have provided direct encouragement and support through the Group of Friends mechanism. In the case of El Salvador, the Group of Friends consisted of Colombia, Mexico, Spain and Venezuela, with the later addition of the United States of America, while in Guatemala, it consisted of the countries mentioned above, with the addition of Norway. In Nicaragua, a Government initiative allowed friendly countries (Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden) to form a Support Group, with UNDP serving as its technical secretariat, to follow Nicaragua's transition and to support internal consensus-building. The Support Group was particularly active in stimulating international support for the electoral process in 1996; in supporting UNDP's project to facilitate property titling and indemnity; and in helping Nicaraguans make their case vis-à-vis donors and international financial institutions on the external debt issue. The Group was dissolved following the conclusion of the second consecutive transfer of power to a democratically elected Government in January 1997.

17. The First Summit of the Americas, held at Miami, Florida, United States from 9 to 11 December 1994, led to the commitment of all participants to work together, under the coordination of the Trade Unit of the Organization of American States (OAS), towards the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by the year 2005. The Second Summit of the Americas took place at Santiago de Chile, from 18 to 19 April 1998, and established that the 34 participating countries share common goals in areas as diverse as democracy, education, poverty alleviation and drug trafficking. The members also made a renewed commitment to the establishment of an FTAA by the year 2005. The Santiago Declaration called for a hemisferio de valores compartidos consisting of a free trade area for goods, investments and services with full respect for democratic systems. Although the President of the United States has not obtained Congressional approval to negotiate a fast-track agreement, steps were taken to establish the mandates of the nine technical commissions negotiating specific issues for the FTAA: agriculture, subsidies, competition policy, free access to markets, investments, services, public sector purchases, intellectual property, solution of controversies and a consultative group on smaller economies. A summit implementation revision group (Grupo de Revisión de la Implementación de Cumbres) was created to revise advances in the implementation. OAS will continue to operate as a registry of advances and will provide technical support to the Group. ECLAC, IDB, the World Bank and the Pan-American Health Organization are called on to play a role in funding and technically supporting the plan of action.

18. The region's political dialogue and economic cooperation with the European Union was enhanced at the San José XIV Ministerial Conference, held in Costa Rica on 10 and 11 February 1998 and attended by the Foreign Ministers of the Central American countries, the European "Troika" (Foreign Ministers of Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), European Commissioner Manuel Marín, representatives from the Group of Three (Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela), and Belize and the Dominican Republic as observers. The European Union called for the start of a new era of relations with Central America based on support for the consolidation of peace and democracy. Three major topics were discussed, namely, cooperation, trade and investment. The European Union emphasized the need for Central American countries to push ahead in the process of political and economic integration, in accordance with the new cooperation guidelines redefined by both parties during their twelfth meeting and confirmed at the thirteenth meeting held at The Hague. The guidelines focused on the strengthening of the rule of law; support to social policies; and support to the Central American integration process.

19. The "Tuxtla Group", consisting of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama, was founded in 1991. Since 1996, it has met at the level of Heads of State every two years. At the Tuxtla III conference, which took place at San Salvador on 17 July 1998, the eight countries agreed to join forces in areas of common political and economic interest, decided to act as partners in commerce, services and investment and issued a 69-point agreement including articles on immigration, the fight against drugs, education, technical exchanges, health, transportation and cultural development. In other instances of extraregional cooperation, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras made progress in negotiating a joint free trade agreement with Mexico, to be signed before the end of 1998. Costa Rica signed a similar agreement in 1994 and Nicaragua did so in 1998.

20. In February 1997, the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration

(SIECA) signed an agreement with the Association of Caribbean States, aimed at promoting programmes for the commercial and investment potential of the region and an agreement to conduct regular meetings and take joint actions. At a special summit of Central American Presidents, including those of Panama and Belize, held in the Dominican Republic from 5 to 7 November 1997, the region's representatives manifested their willingness to extend the integration process to other areas. Thus, the Dominican Republic was included as a partner in the Sustainable Development Alliance and later, on 17 April 1998, signed a free trade agreement with the five Central American countries which will go into effect in January 1999. The Dominican Republic also made a commitment to present a proposal to the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to initiate contacts with a view to strengthening their ties with Central America.

21. The economic contribution of the international community to the peace processes in Central America continues to follow the course established during a series of Consultative Group meetings organized by IDB and attended by representatives of the international financial institutions (IDB, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank) and donor countries. In the case of Guatemala, a meeting will take place in Brussels in late October 1998, to follow up the international donor community's support to the peace process up to the year 2000. Regarding Nicaragua, a Consultative Group meeting held at Geneva from 1 to 2 April 1998 resulted in pledges of US$ 1,300 million. In this context, at a meeting of the Paris Club, held on 21 April 1998, it was agreed to reduce Nicaragua's foreign debt by US$ 200 million.

22. The President of the World Bank discussed and reviewed his institution's relations with Central American countries during a visit to the region in March 1998. Currently, the World Bank's loans are being shifted from classic agricultural and industry activities to support commerce, finance, export of non-traditional goods and the stock market. Similarly, IDB, the World Bank and IMF have developed a new approach[4] based on the linkage between economic growth and social development, along four axes: (a) full involvement of rural and indigenous communities; (b) broader coverage of basic social services; (c) modernization of state and public institutions; and (d) development of the environment and private sector. In Guatemala, the President of the World Bank launched an appeal to the International Financial Corporation to increase its assistance to Central American private sectors, so as to promote their active role in the sustainable development of the region. The Bank considers that the promotion of the economic potential of the poorest sectors of Central American societies will reduce the possibility of the resumption of social conflicts that might endanger political stability.

23. OAS has continued to contribute to the Central American process, having assumed a leading role on trade issues throughout the Americas. OAS cooperation with the region has continued to be extended through the Central American Mine-Clearance Programme, carried out in conjunction with the Inter-American Defence Board, as well as through the presence of the OAS International Support and Verification Commission in Nicaragua, which in June and July 1997 verified, together with the Catholic Church, the disarmament and demobilization of the Frente 3-80. During its latest summit, held at Caracas in June 1998, OAS renewed its mandate to strengthen Latin American democracies, provide human rights protection, mine clearance and electoral assistance. In accordance with the commitments of the II Summit of the Americas, OAS is called upon to play a role in the strengthening of its own human rights institutional framework. In this context, OAS established a Special Rapporteur to oversee freedom of expression in the region and will also be in charge of the promotion of women's rights, given the existence of laws and practices which impede *de jure* and de facto equality of women in the region. Also stressed was the role that OAS might play in involving civil society in all its planned activities.

III. United Nations

24. Since I last reported to the General Assembly on the situation in Central America (A/52/344), the United Nations has continued to support the countries of Central America in their efforts to consolidate peace, democracy and development within the mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General and the various programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. In El Salvador, a small follow-up unit continued to verify implementation of outstanding elements of the peace agreements until 30 June 1998 (see para. 4 above). In Guatemala, MINUGUA continues to verify compliance with the Peace Agreements which came into effect in December 1996. In addition to these specific missions, United Nations operational activities have been carried out within national and regional programmes.

United Nations in El Salvador

25. On 17 December 1996, the General Assembly, by its resolution 51/199 A, decided that the responsibilities of verification and good offices entrusted to the United Nations should be executed through periodic visits to El Salvador by a high-level envoy from New York, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, who would be assisted for a six-month period by a small support unit in the field. The implementation of the peace accords was at a sufficiently advanced stage to allow me to recommend to the General Assembly that this support unit be closed down as a separate entity on 30 June 1997. By its resolution 51/199 B of 31 July 1997, the General Assembly decided to close down the support unit and welcomed my proposal to assign two international Professionals and two local consultants to a unit to work under the administrative structure of UNDP, for a period of six months. In my letter dated 15 December 1997 (A/52/731), I informed the General Assembly of developments in the peace process in El Salvador, particularly those aspects of the peace accords in the socio-economic area which had yet to be fully implemented. In its decision 52/436, the General Assembly welcomed my proposal to maintain the unit for a further six months, until 30 June 1998.

26. In my report to the General Assembly of 1 July 1997 (A/51/917), I noted the extraordinary transformations that had taken place in El Salvador, five years after the conclusion of the negotiations which were conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. In particular, I stressed that the demilitarization process, the holding of national elections and the creation of key democratic institutions had contributed greatly to the consolidation of the peace process. I outlined the importance of maintaining a subsidiary role of the military in the preservation of internal security, whereas the National Civil Police remains crucial to the maintenance of public security. I also noted the importance of the National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights (ombudsman), which is one of the key institutions created under the peace accords. In the socio-economic area, I indicated that there were a number of the peace accords on which implementation had yet to be completed. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/199 B, I updated the Assembly in my report of 15 December 1997 (A/52/731) and reported on the four priority areas being followed by the support unit: the Land Transfer Programme, the Human Settlements Programme, the excess of the constitutional limit of 245 hectares, and the Fund for the War-Wounded. While some advances had been made, progress was still slow.

27. The gradual reduction of the presence of the United Nations in El Salvador means that new arrangements have to be made to mainstream the outstanding elements of peace accords into the political and development agenda of the country. In my letter dated 1 July 1998 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/52/1008), I provided a further update on the above-mentioned four pending issues. I reported that the Land-Transfer Programme had advanced significantly and could be considered close to completion, owing to the active role played by the implementing agency, the Land Bank. Of greater concern was the human settlements programme, largely because of obstacles in the deed registration process by the Land Registry and prolonged delays in the payment to property owners. The United Nations had complied with its commitment to investigate the 40 remaining properties allegedly in excess of the constitutional limit of 245 hectares, but the Salvadorian Institute for Agrarian Transformation (ISTA) still appeared reluctant to take action. The situation previously outlined in my report of 1 July 1997 (A/51/917) concerning the obstacles faced by relatives of deceased combatants who did not appear in the original 1993 census remained unchanged.

28. The United Nations remains committed to the consolidation of the peace-building process in El Salvador. I have thus entrusted UNDP with the responsibility to follow up and to explore mechanisms to assist the Government of El Salvador in the implementation of pending issues, in consultation with donors. In this regard, steps are being taken to develop a common United Nations political and development approach to integrate the pending issues into a broader agenda oriented towards their successful completion. I have asked the United Nations Resident Coordinator, currently the UNDP Resident Representative, to coordinate this effort, in order to facilitate the continuity of the process. Meanwhile, the verification and good offices functions of the Organization will continue to be carried out from Headquarters.

The peace process in Guatemala

29. As part of an exemplary instance of post-conflict peace-building, the United Nations, through MINUGUA, has continued to verify the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreements concluded between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca in December 1996, and to provide good offices and advisory services. On 31 October 1997, I reported to the General Assembly (A/52/554) on progress in the implementation of the agreements and recommended that minor adjustments be made to the structure and staffing of MINUGUA to enable the Mission to function more efficiently. I also recommended that the mandate of

MINUGUA be renewed from 1 April 1998 to 31 December 1999, in order to allow for adequate substantive and administrative planning within the regular budget for the biennium 1998–1999. However, by its resolution 52/175 of 18 December 1997, the General Assembly authorized the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA only until 31 December 1998.

30. The second phase for implementation of the Guatemalan agreements, covering the period from July to December of 1997, placed emphasis on social investment, public administration reform, rural development, fiscal reform and the restructuring of public security and national defence. I described the achievements and shortfalls of this phase in my report of 4 February 1998 (A/52/757). I stressed that, in the year since the signing of the agreements, many recent positive trends had been consolidated, namely, greater pluralism and political freedom and a marked increase in the participation of the indigenous population and women's groups in all aspects of national life. The peaceful integration of URNG ex-combatants and the transformation of the URNG into a political party were other signs of positive change. MINUGUA had noted a growing commitment to overhaul the judiciary and public security institutions; state action was being redirected towards social investment and rural development and new institutions were being created to deal with land disputes. Another important development had been the gradual decrease in the role of the armed forces, the only exception to this trend being the use of military personnel in public security, given the limitations of the police in dealing with high crime levels. I stressed that this showed the importance of making every effort to strengthen the National Civil Police. However, despite the efforts made, I noted that important commitments would have to be rescheduled to the third phase of the timetable (1998–2000), among them, the crucial tax reform commitments required to finance social development programmes and strengthen institutions. In addition, I indicated that popular support for the peace process was still being undermined by the lack of public security and by persistent economic and social difficulties. While there were no immediate solutions to these problems, I underlined the need for commitments to be maintained where the social debt was most pressing and for all sectors of society to be involved more actively in support of the peace agenda.

31. On 26 April 1998, the Most Reverend Juan José Gerardi, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Guatemala and Coordinator of the Archdiocese Human Rights Office, was brutally assassinated in Guatemala City. His death, coming only two days after the public presentation of the report of the "Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory" (REMHI), which documented the human rights violations that occurred during the 36-year conflict, had a profoundly disturbing effect at both the national and international levels. In a communiqué issued on 27 April 1998 (SG/SM/6360), I deplored the crime and expressed the hope that light would soon be shed on the circumstances behind it. MINUGUA has been monitoring the activities of the institutions responsible for investigating the crime since it was committed. At the time of drafting this report, the motives and circumstances behind the murder remain unclear. It is essential that the culprits be identified and brought to trial in order to dispel the sense of impunity which has re-emerged following the crime.

32. Throughout the period covered by the present report, MINUGUA continued to verify compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights (A/48/928-S/1994/448, annex I) and reported separately on this issue. On 15 June 1998, I transmitted to the General Assembly the Mission's eighth report on human rights (A/52/946), covering the period from 1 July 1997 to 31 March 1998. In that report, MINUGUA stressed that criminal violence was one of the main factors affecting human rights in Guatemala and noted that, despite the State's efforts, serious shortcomings in the administration of justice and the National Civil Police still prevented the effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of offenders. The strengthening of the judiciary and public security apparatus was a long-term commitment and MINUGUA pointed out that it required a sustained commitment on the part of the State and society at large. At the same time, the Mission expressed its concern regarding the frequent recourse to illegal methods or to the practice of taking justice into one's own hands. It stressed that the numerous cases of lynching and "social cleansing" and the possible resurgence of illegal security forces and irregular armed groups were fundamentally incompatible with the rule of law and urged that this matter be given priority on the State's security agenda.

33. On 21 and 22 July 1998, I visited Guatemala as part of an official tour of five Latin American nations and I was able to have constructive meetings with the President and his Cabinet, the leaders of the URNG, the Follow-Up Commission, the Historical Clarification Commission and the Archbishop of Guatemala. I was also able to discuss the peace process with the numerous partners of the United Nations system who are efficiently contributing to post-conflict peace-building in Guatemala, as was evidenced in the United Nations country team's detailed presentation to the Economic and Social Council on 14 July. During the visit, I stressed that I would like to see all Guatemalans embrace the peace process in a spirit of tolerance and reconciliation. Upon being honoured with the Orden del

Quetzal (see SG/SM/6648), I acknowledged that the road to peace was not without obstacles and difficulties and encouraged Guatemalans to persevere in implementing the peace agenda in order to make the Peace Agreements a reality. In this context, I also noted the importance of moving forward on constitutional reforms as well as on essential tax, land and justice matters.

34. A report on compliance with the commitments of the Peace Agreements between January and July 1998 is to be issued shortly. I am also preparing to transmit to the General Assembly my recommendations regarding the renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA after 31 December 1998.

35. This period can be viewed as the most promising phase of Guatemala's recent history. The months ahead will be crucial to the consolidation of essential political, social and economic transformations, and it is to be hoped that the activities leading up to the presidential elections of November 1999 will not slow down or halt the process. The peace agenda represents a blueprint for the implementation of these profound changes and the parties to the Peace Agreements, national institutions and society at large will have to move forward vigorously to make them a reality. The United Nations, through MINUGUA and the partners of the United Nations system, remains ready to help them in this endeavour.

United Nations operational activities

36. United Nations support to Central America through operational activities is comprehensive and diversified. It has sought, in particular, to facilitate the regional process of development on the basis of subregional and national cooperation frameworks. In 1996, UNDP started a new programme of subregional cooperation in Central America, designed in response to the priorities and commitments established by Central American Presidents at their summits. The programme focuses on three main areas: peace and democratic governance; eradication of poverty and sustainable development of natural resources.

37. In the area of peace and democratic governance, the United Nations operational system has provided assistance to consensus-building processes and building capacity of democratic institutions. At the subregional level, projects have provided support to the secretariat of the Central American Integration System and strengthened regional organizations representing civil society to facilitate their participation in the integration process.

38. The United Nations system continued to support peace and democratization throughout the region. In Guatemala, UNDP, working in coordination with bilateral donors, the European Union and United Nations agencies, assisted in the demobilization of URNG ex-combatants, and is supporting their long-term social and economic integration through various projects. UNDP was also involved in supporting the demobilization of almost 2,000 combatants from groups in the north of Nicaragua and continued helping the reintegration of former combatants in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The strengthening of democratic institutions is assisted through various projects, specifically in the areas of judicial reform (creation of public defender systems in El Salvador and Guatemala) public security, offices of the human rights ombudsmen, fiscal reform and the process of decentralization. In Guatemala, the United Nations conducted programmes for the resettlement of uprooted populations, the promotion of respect for the identity and rights of the indigenous peoples and the resolution of land conflicts through the creation of cadastral systems and new institutions.

39. With regard to the eradication of poverty, the United Nations has continued the inter-agency execution of the Programme for the Promotion of the Human Sustainable Development in Central America, aiming at establishing regional, local and national consensus among the main social actors and strengthening local organizations in peripheral areas of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Another important undertaking is the UNDP project entitled "Technical assistance for the Agricultural Development of Central America", which assists the Central American Governments with their policies and modernization programmes in the area of agriculture and institutional reform of the rural sector. The project involves the financing and participation of the World Bank, IDB, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

40. In compliance with the Beijing Plan of Action, a joint UNDP, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (UNAIDS), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and ECLAC project entitled "Human Rights Campaign on Violence against Women and Girls" supports the preparation of national reports on gender violence, as an input to the mid-term evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition, a regional conference on gender and violence is under preparation for

the last quarter of 1998. In June 1998, the First Ladies of Central America, in cooperation with IICA and IDB, established the Regional Council for Rural Women.

41. Finally, the United Nations supported a number of projects aimed at the protection of the sustainable development of the environment in Central America. At the subregional level, UNDP, through the Global Environmental Facility, is assisting the Central American Commission on the Environment in its efforts to establish a programme for the consolidation of the Meso-American Corridor and to set up a funding mechanism to address global environmental issues. In addition, UNDP is supporting national efforts to fulfil the countries' commitments as parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

42. In accordance with the recommendations issued in my report of 14 July 1997 (A/51/950), Guatemala was selected to be among the pioneering countries for developing a United Nations Development Framework. The experience of Guatemala was presented to the Economic and Social Council on 14 July 1998. The United Nations country team in Guatemala[5] is working on a framework of support to the peace accords. This is a clear example of United Nations interaction with the Government and donors in the context of post-conflict peace-building. The country team includes 17 members from programmes and funds, as well as the humanitarian and specialized agencies, MINUGUA and the World Bank. Close relations are maintained with IMF and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

IV. Observations

43. The Central American peace process has evolved considerably since the signing of the Esquipulas II Agreement. For the first time in decades, not one of the countries in the region is plagued by internal conflict. However, for the peace to be firm and lasting, strong linkages must be maintained between freedom, democracy and development. The challenge of fulfilling the promise of peace is one of which Central American Presidents are acutely aware. As stated in the joint presentation during the fifty-second session of the resolution on Central America (52/176), the Presidents acknowledge the serious structural issues which still lie ahead, noting that the challenge of meeting them is closely related to progress in human development, particularly in the alleviation and ultimate eradication of extreme poverty, the promotion of economic and social justice, progress in judicial reform and the safeguarding of human rights. I therefore warmly encourage all their efforts to ensure, as they stated in the Second Panama Declaration of 12 July 1997, the strengthening of democracy and institutional transformations and I welcome their steps towards an integrated system which would consolidate Central America as a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

44. I am certain that, with the support and efforts of the international community as a whole, the Central American region can rise to these challenges and become a model of conflict resolution, consolidated by peace and democracy through comprehensive development and the adoption of political solutions (see A/49/901-S/1995/396, annex 1). At this critical stage, the consolidation of the deep transformations experienced by Central American societies requires the full involvement and support of both the Central American nations and the international community, to prevent the resurgence of the causes of conflicts in the region. As Secretary-General, I am ready to continue to play the active role in this process entrusted to me by the General Assembly.

Notes

[1] "Centroamerica: evolución económica durante 1997", Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, LC/MEX/L.356, 21 July 1998.

[2] "Diagnóstico de la Institucionalidad Regional Centroamericana", LC/MEX/R.581/Rev.2, 28 February 1997.

[3] "Convención sobre la Nacionalidad y Derechos Adquiridos en las Zonas Delimitadas por la Corte Internacional de Justicia de la Haya el 11 de septiembre de 1992" and "Acuerdo para la Ejecución del Programa de Demarcación de la Frontera El Salvador-Honduras".

[4] "Una guia al Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Al Banco Mundial y al Fondo Monetario Internacional". John Ruthrauff. Segunda edición, 1997. Centro para la Educación Democrática.

[5] MINUGUA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, UNAIDS, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Volunteers, UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, PAHO/World Health Organization, FAO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), ECLAC, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the International Organization for Migration.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Emergency assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/169 I of 16 December 1997, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan". In that resolution the General Assembly noted that despite the successful conclusion of inter-Tajik talks and the efforts of the Government of Tajikistan to allocate limited resources to returning refugees and displaced persons, the economic situation in Tajikistan remained bleak and essential social services were largely dysfunctional, making a large percentage of the population vulnerable. The General Assembly also expressed concern that the security situation in parts of Tajikistan remained volatile.

2. Member States and others concerned were encouraged by the General Assembly to continue assistance to alleviate the urgent humanitarian needs of Tajikistan and to offer support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy.

3. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in Tajikistan and to report to it at its fifty-third session on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 52/169 I. The present report covers the period from the adoption of the resolution to mid-August 1998. During that period, five reports were submitted to the Security Council on the situation in Tajikistan (S/1997/686 and Add.1 of 4 September 1997, S/1997/859 of 5 November 1997, S/1998/113 and Corr.1 of 10 February 1998, S/1998/374 of 6 May 1998 and S/1998/754 of 13 August 1998).

II. Background to the situation in Tajikistan

4. Civil war broke out in Tajikistan in the summer of 1992, less than a year after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. By mid-1993, in a country of under 6 million, an estimated 50,000 people, mostly civilians, had been killed, some 600,000 had been displaced internally, and an additional 60,000 had crossed the border into northern Afghanistan. Scores of others had fled to neighbouring central Asian republics and to other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Reliable statistics on the number of remaining refugees, many of whom have turned into economic migrants and seasonal workers, are not available.

5. By mid-1995, the majority of the internally displaced persons wishing to return to their pre-war homes had done so. With the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other international organizations, almost all refugees based in Afghanistan had returned to Tajikistan by the end of 1997.

6. On 27 June 1997, after three years of inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. The Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR), a 26-member implementing body for the General Agreement, with equal representation from the Government and UTO, started its activities in Dushanbe on 15 September 1997. The General Agreement, which foresaw a 12- to 18-month transitional period for implementation of all its provisions, was hampered on several occasions during the period by sporadic violence and political impasses.

7. The appointment on 12 February 1998 of five members of UTO to cabinet-level posts and the return of Akbar Turajonzoda, the UTO deputy leader who was appointed on 10 March as first Deputy Prime Minister for economic relations with CIS, were considered as major steps in overcoming the violence and slow implementation of the peace process.

8. The peace process faced one of its greatest political challenges following the adoption of the law on political parties in the May parliamentary session, which banned political parties based on religion. A 12-member Conciliatory Commission (UTO and Government) was established by presidential decree to propose recommendations on eliminating the disagreements between CNR and Parliament over the law. On 18 June the President agreed to return the modified draft law to the Parliament at its next session.

9. The registration and demobilization of UTO fighters remain a difficult issue, and the number of UTO fighters to be absorbed into the reformed power ministries have not been identified and decided upon. As for the government forces, their demobilization has not yet been addressed.

10. The volatile security situation in Tajikistan took a serious turn during the week of 20 July 1998, resulting in the murder, by unknown assailants, of four members of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), two military observers, from Poland and Uruguay, a civil affairs officer from Japan and a Tajik driver/interpreter. This has obliged relief organizations to suspend their activities in the Karategin Valley and to

proceed in other areas amid heightened security considerations. It has also dealt a severe blow to the peace process.

III. Humanitarian assistance

11. The humanitarian situation remains precarious, with increasing emergency needs throughout the country being only partly met through international assistance. Those needs are exacerbated by the State's lack of capacity to respond to the social and welfare needs of its citizens. The present unstable environment is preventing the establishment of wide-reaching rehabilitation programmes, thus accelerating the deterioration.

12. The more visible emergency situation of the early 1990s has evolved into a slow deterioration in the living conditions of vulnerable groups. A growing number of them – pensioners, the institutionalized and others – are totally dependent on international humanitarian aid. According to a 1998 World Food Programme (WFP) report, 80 per cent of people live below the poverty line, while according to the State statistical agency, almost 50 per cent of the population are unemployed.

13. Rehabilitation activities are essential in order to break the cycle of dependency on international assistance. Such activities are being prevented from taking root by insecurity, inadequate legislation, a lack of clear policy on supporting private initiatives, an ineffective banking system, expectation of credits from the central Government and the general lack of skills and training to promote poverty alleviation.

14. The United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for 1998, launched in March, requested $34 million to cover continued humanitarian assistance for vulnerable groups. The bulk of the appeal, $9 million, was requested for emergency food assistance and to promote food security. More than $5 million was needed to support agricultural sustainability. An additional $10 million was required for the deteriorating health sector. Under 19 per cent of the 1998 needs have been funded to date (see attached tables).

15. This muted response by donors was consistent with the results of an earlier conference organized in Vienna by the United Nations in November 1997 in support of peace and reconciliation in Tajikistan. While large amounts were pledged, very little emerged as real new funding. It underscores the low level of interest in Tajikistan, a country at the juncture of peace and war. The lack of confidence on the part of donors prevents funding for the transition from war to materialize.

16. The killing of four UNMOT staff members in Tajikistan has affected international operations throughout the country. The continued uncertainty and the lack of a favourable environment in which to conduct humanitarian operations are compounded in Tajikistan by political, military and criminal acts aimed at derailing the peace process. Agencies providing humanitarian aid are concerned that if the prevailing security conditions continue to prevent the provision of assistance to certain areas it would have a serious impact on vulnerable groups, especially in view of the approaching winter months. In view of the deterioration in the security situation, a temporary relocation of non-essential United Nations humanitarian personnel to Tashkent began on 24 August. All humanitarian personnel are expected to return to Tajikistan as soon as security conditions permit.

A. Implementation of humanitarian assistance

Voluntary repatriation

17. Since UNHCR resumed its voluntary repatriation operation in July 1997, to date more than 12,000 Tajik refugees have returned, from northern Afghanistan (11,000), Turkmenistan (1,000) and Kyrgyzstan (around 30 people). Other agencies, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Tajik Red Crescent Society and the International Organization for Migration have assisted in this exercise.

18. Most of the returnees have been repatriated to districts in the southern province of Khatlon, where UNHCR, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have provided rehabilitation and reintegration support. This includes a shelter programme for the reconstruction of 2,000 houses for returnees.

19. UNHCR is providing funds for this construction programme through the Save the Children Federation (United States), the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and Shelter Now International. Caritas Switzerland is also engaged in shelter reconstruction for returnees to Khatlon province. However, delays caused by insufficient building materials and inadequate quality guarantees and delays in identification of beneficiaries and determination of construction methodology have resulted in an extension of the programme beyond 1998.

Food aid

20. WFP and other food aid agencies have about 1,320,000 beneficiaries who require assistance, more than 20 per cent of the population of Tajikistan. WFP and its implementing partners deliver to 44 per cent of the total beneficiaries. The balance is provided for by CARE International, the Aga Khan Foundation, German Agro Action, the Save the Children Federation, Mercy Corps International, Mission East, IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

21. A recent European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) survey indicated that 16 per cent of households were food-insecure, lacking the capacity to maintain an adequate diet without food aid. The report estimated that even with normal economic growth, the proportion of food-insecure households would gradually increase, and with the current economic decline more households would become food-insecure. The European Union's Humanitarian Assistance Committee recently approved a submission by ECHO of a contribution of ECU 16.6 million for Tajikistan.

22. WFP reports that food aid agencies encounter frequent cases of death due to malnutrition in prisons and hospitals, while women in Khatlon province have serious problems with anaemia. In the future, the bulk of food aid will continue to support vulnerable groups, such as pensioners, widows, female-headed households, children and the institutionalized.

23. Food aid agencies are also continuing efforts in all regions to promote self-reliance and household food security through the spread of land-lease schemes, income-generating activities and food for work and training initiatives. Monitoring mechanisms to improve the targeting and delivery of food aid are being strengthened.

Agriculture

24. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Tajikistan has a food deficit of 300,000 metric tons despite the fact that agriculture is the leading sector of the Tajik economy. It accounts for 25 per cent of gross domestic product and employs about 40 per cent of the labour force. The lack of arable land (Tajikistan is 93 per cent mountainous) and the slow pace of land reform preclude any near-term positive changes in the performance of the agriculture sector. For the foreseeable future, food aid will continue to be required, as commercial food imports have fallen sharply. While the Government has released more land for privatization and has seen a resulting increase in cereal production, it maintains that the main agricultural focus continues to be cotton production. Livestock farming and fruit and vegetable cultivation are undertaken on an individual basis.

25. The harsh winter in Tajikistan in 1997/98 adversely affected agricultural production by causing delays in spring planting. The situation has been exacerbated by a recent spate of landslides and floods that have damaged irrigation systems, roads and bridges. The Ministry of Agriculture reports that more than 64,000 hectares of cultivated land have been damaged.

26. FAO provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture. CARE International, German Agro Action and the Aga Khan Foundation, along with FAO, are supporting the recovery and sustainability of the agricultural sector. FAO is currently implementing two projects related to seed potato multiplication. Despite security constraints and climatic problems, it is expected that 4,000 metric tons of potatoes will be available for consumption, with an additional 1,500 metric tons for seed.

Health

27. The government health service suffers from deficiencies, common to other public sector services, due to the Government's inability to provide resources and adequate services. International assistance is geared to supplying drugs, medical equipment and technical advice. It does not tackle the serious infrastructure problems such as rehabilitation of buildings, low staff salaries and insufficient training. Morbidity and mortality rates for Tajikistan remain alarming, even with the high levels of humanitarian health assistance delivered over the past five years.

28. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the health service has deteriorated and survives only through international support. Patterns of main health indicators are disturbing, with maternal and infant mortality rates still high (82.3 per 100,000 live births and 30.4 per 1,000 respectively). The spread of malaria and typhoid is of grave concern. The universal lack of essential drugs and antibiotics, chlorine for treatment of drinking water and diagnostic facilities aggravate the situation. This is compounded by the lack of trained health personnel, many of whom fled during the civil war or were driven away by insufficient and irregular salaries.

29. The World Bank has allocated funds to support the ongoing structural adjustment of the health service and to train health professionals. Activities are under way to strengthen the primary health care system, to introduce reform of the service delivery outlets, to introduce new

management and to make administrative structures more efficient.

30. The Ministry of Health receives management and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Other relief and development organizations, including Medical Emergency Relief International, ACTED, the Aga Khan Foundation, Pharmaciens sans frontiers, Médecins sans frontières-Holland, ICRC, IFRC, the Central Asian Development Agency and the Save the Children Foundation are carrying out health support programmes. The main activities continue to be control of typhoid and malaria epidemics and of respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases in children. Other problems being addressed include iron deficiency in women, reproductive health, the strengthening of management capacity at all levels and the provision of essential drugs.

31. UNICEF provided vaccines, basic health kits and essential drugs to local health posts, and cold chain equipment and technical assistance and training to Ministry of Health staff. WHO and UNICEF conducted two poliomyelitis immunization campaigns for children in 1998. WHO provided kits for diphtheria to the national immunization centre and diagnostic material for blood testing to prevent the spread of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome to government laboratories.

32. The overall aim of the United Nations Population Fund is to improve reproductive health services, including family planning, with emphasis on increasing community participation in the development of policies and the provision of services. Technical assistance, equipment and contraceptives are provided.

Water supply and sanitation

33. Years of under-investment and poor maintenance of the water system have made typhoid fever the most problematic of acute diarrhoeal diseases. Throughout the country, water supply and treatment systems have collapsed and people have no guarantee of receiving potable water. There are shortages of essential chemicals, equipment and spare parts, as well as funding difficulties, even in urban areas. Cross-contamination of sewage into the water supply occurs owing to pipeline breakage, leaks and flooding.

34. IFRC and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation intervened with an emergency water supply and treatment programme to combat the typhoid epidemic that broke out in Dushanbe last year. This included supplying chlorine and spare parts, repairing equipment and organizing a country-wide public information campaign on water usage and hygiene. Coupled with good monitoring, these measures had an immediate impact. The number of reported typhoid cases in the corresponding period in 1998 declined dramatically.

35. The United Nations Office for Project Services has completed the rehabilitation of the water supply system in Kulyab in the southern part of the country, thus providing clean water to 65,000 people for the first time. When the rehabilitation of the sewage system is concluded, the root causes of typhoid, malaria and other water-borne diseases in the area will be largely eliminated. UNICEF provides hand pumps and sand filters to schools and other institutions, as well as hygiene education and maintenance training.

36. The intermittent funding for water and sanitation activities allows for small-scale interventions only. Large-scale funding for major improvements is required in order to secure proper water system management through cost-recovery schemes, water-rate setting and comprehensive accounting systems.

Education

37. Tajikistan inherited its educational structures and curricula from the Soviet period. This means that until recently, 88 per cent of the adult population had received some level of education. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent economic and social crises have resulted in a sharp decline in income and the impoverishment of the population. With the civil war, these factors have combined to seriously damage the educational system.

38. Between 1992 and 1997 more than 5,000 teachers left the country, and many children do not attend school or attend only part-time. The number of hours spent in the classroom has declined sharply, as many teachers with unrealistically low and irregular salaries have sought alternative sources of income. With the State budget unable to provide free educational materials and support, one fifth of children in Tajikistan cannot receive an education.

39. The poor physical condition of buildings and the lack of water, heating and educational materials make classroom activity extremely difficult. Lack of shoes and clothing and security problems prevent children, especially girls, from attending school. The United Nations Office for Project Services, the Aga Khan Foundation and UNHCR provide support for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of buildings. UNICEF, ICRC, IFRC, the Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom), Mercy Corps International and Orphans, Refugees and Aid provide training, materials and non-food items. WFP and the Save the Children Foundation support school feeding programmes.

Child protection

40. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNICEF have created the child protection sector to deal with the effect of growing poverty on children. The manifestations of child poverty include a growing number of children involved in work and in criminal behaviour, including petty crime, prostitution and drug use. While unaccompanied children appear as "street kids" in Dushanbe and other major towns, there is evidence that many more children are abandoned.

41. Poverty is breaking up families, threatening the morale and social fabric of communities. The poor state of education further reduces child development opportunities. A wide range of measures have been developed to deal with the different dimensions of the problem, including advocacy, capacity-building of agencies providing services and protection of legal and other rights.

42. The immediate humanitarian needs are being addressed. A variety of programmes have been implemented in support of female-headed households, returnees, orphans, street children, children in prison and residential care by providing food aid, material support, psychological services and legal protection. UNICEF, ICRC, the Save the Children Fund, Orphans, Refugees and Aid and a number of national agencies are collaborating to improve information-sharing, network-building and service delivery.

B. Coordination of humanitarian assistance

43. The present Field Coordination Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was established in early 1997. It was strengthened with additional staff in order to improve the overall coordination of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinator. The Unit is an integral part of all coordination networks involving United Nations agencies, other international agencies and non-governmental organizations, both in the capital and in the provinces.

44. Fortnightly inter-agency meetings take place in Dushanbe comprising the humanitarian community as well as donors and bilateral representatives. This is replicated in the southern part of the country. Regular feedback from meetings in Kurghan Teppa helps improve overall national coordination and complementary planning. The regular monthly bulletin of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and thematic papers keep the humanitarian community updated on pertinent issues.

45. Regular sectoral meetings covering food aid, health, agriculture, shelter, human rights, education, water and sanitation, demobilization and child protection are held in Dushanbe. These meetings address policy, planning, strategy and implementation issues. The Government participates in those meetings through the relevant ministries and the Aid Coordination Unit. Funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this unit is accountable to the Prime Minister's office and is responsible for monitoring all commitments and disbursements of international aid and investment to Tajikistan.

IV. Rehabilitation and development cooperation

46. UNDP and the World Bank assisted the Government of Tajikistan in preparing its documentation for the meeting of the World Bank Consultative Group on Tajikistan, held in Paris on 20 May 1998. This collaboration will continue on a longer-term basis through the cofinancing of a six-month living standard survey, which aims to create a national poverty profile with baseline data.

47. UNDP carried out a survey of rehabilitation needs in the Karategin Valley in October 1997. The results of the survey were used by the World Bank as the basis for formulating its $20 million post-conflict emergency reconstruction project for agricultural support, bridges and roads rehabilitation, small community works and other infrastructure work to be carried out in the Karategin Valley.

48. UNDP funded and the United Nations Office for Project Services implemented a rehabilitation and reconstruction programme in the three sub-offices of Garm, Kulyab and Shaartuz, and 180 sub-projects have been completed or are ongoing in the areas of agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure, capacity-building and gender development. The results and methodology of the rehabilitation and reconstruction programme have raised the interest of other partners in a $1.7 million cost-sharing/trust fund arrangement.

49. The main strengths of the programme lie in its capacity-building aspect. Investments made by UNDP since 1996 have allowed the United Nations Office for Project Services to carry out a complex portfolio of sub-projects and to implement programmes on behalf of other international institutions to support the different types of transition faced by Tajikistan; namely, from war to peace, from a centrally planned to a market economy, from a top-down decision-making system to one that gives villagers wider

opportunities to participate in decisions, and from a scheme of social welfare based on State subsidies towards a system of mutual responsibility.

50. The cooperation of UNDP with the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Culture and Education continues to be productive, with the expansion of the peace-building project to Kulyab and the consolidation of the activities already ongoing in certain districts in the Khatlon region. During the current one-year phase, 20 community development centre leaders designated by the project will receive training to manage their centres as independent local non-governmental organizations and to mobilize resources for community socio-economic activities in the Khatlon region. The network created by the project at the community level will be used to support and widen the civic education programme, currently being discussed by a working group involving other agencies (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Aga Khan Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development, UNMOT, UNDP). Other support being provided to the Ministry of Labour includes training and capacity-building. A decision-planning workshop was held in early July 1998 with the key objective being to formulate a comprehensive training, employment and income-generation action plan for vulnerable groups, including ex-combatants and refugees in pilot areas.

51. Peace-building and reconciliation activities have been closely linked to efforts to promote the establishment of an economic environment conducive to self-sufficiency. UNDP focuses on strengthening government capacity to manage external resources from international financial institutions, development agencies and the private sector. The Aid Coordination Unit, currently located in the UNDP office, will be transferred to the Prime Minister's office as part of a management plan to strengthen the professional skills of government staff.

52. In support of economic development, two projects have been funded by UNDP, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as executing agencies. ILO has formulated a pilot labour force survey to identify employment trends, to profile the labour force, including workers' skill levels, and to match the data with opportunities for training, employment and business enterprise schemes, with emphasis on the most vulnerable. UNIDO has been given responsibility for carrying out a survey of the industrial assets in Tajikistan. This is the first comprehensive analysis of existing industrial facilities and includes strategies for privatization, the restructuring of remaining State enterprises and a review of foreign investment in joint ventures.

53. UNDP has demonstrated particular interest in gender-related issues by funding a women's development project, the largest in the CIS countries, with a budget of $758,000 for the period 1997–1999. This support to small enterprise development was successfully tested as a pilot project in Karasu (region of Kofarnihon). The Karasu experience allowed 1,127 women in Kofarnihon to start their own businesses in a two-year period. It is the only new funding source for economic revival in the region for over a year. It created 1,959 jobs, and more than 8,000 people are directly benefiting from the programme. The Karasu model will be replicated in two other areas, Aini, located in a remote mountainous region in the Zarafshan Valley, and Tursunzade, an industrial town, the site of a major aluminum plant.

V. Concluding observations

54. The humanitarian situation in Tajikistan has not changed for the better since the beginning of the year. This is due primarily to the continuing inability of the Government to provide the services that would create the semblance of a social safety net. In the absence of such a safety net and of a revitalized economic fabric providing a modicum of self-sufficiency to rural populations, the most vulnerable, including some 600,000 returnees, continue to require relief aid, while the country as a whole is in dire need of rehabilitation and development assistance.

55. As a result, the United Nations intends to continue its humanitarian programme in Tajikistan by issuing a consolidated inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance for 1999.

56. The Secretary-General wishes to thank donor countries and organizations for their generous support to humanitarian assistance programmes in Tajikistan in the past. At the same time, Tajikistan unfortunately seems to have been omitted from the agendas of most donors in 1998. For a variety of reasons, donor support to Tajikistan has diminished across the board for humanitarian as well as development assistance and for support to peace and reconciliation.

57. As noted in the report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on his July 1998 mission to Tajikistan, it is imperative that donors invest in the peace process for humanitarian reasons as well as for development assistance and in order to support peace and reconciliation.

58. Despite the reprehensible premeditated murder of United Nations personnel in Garm, continuing humanitarian assistance to Tajikistan is required in order to maintain conditions for peace and to prepare the transition to rehabilitation. Without significant international support in creating conditions for the country to shed its dependency on humanitarian assistance, Tajikistan could very well become a permanent emergency. It is imperative that donors "invest" in peace, primarily by delivering what was pledged in Vienna and Paris in support of the peace process.

59. Equally important, the Government of Tajikistan and UTO need to undertake immediate, concrete steps to show rapid and real progress in the peace process.

60. The Secretary-General wishes to express his profound appreciation for the excellent and often selfless work that the men and women of the humanitarian organizations are undertaking in Tajikistan, often putting their lives at risk and even making the ultimate sacrifice.

61. The Secretary-General is deeply distressed by the growing number of crimes committed against humanitarian and other staff members, and in particular by the murder of unarmed United Nations personnel in Garm. The safety and security of United Nations personnel rests with the host country and the parties to the conflict. He urges the Government of Tajikistan and the leadership of UTO to do their utmost to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime and to bring them to justice, and calls upon the parties to take real and effective measures to ensure not only that there is no repetition of this tragedy, but that United Nations and other personnel can work in conditions of safety and security in their task of assisting Tajikistan in its difficult transition.

Table 1

A. Summary of requirements and contributions, as at 27 July 1998, towards the 1998 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Tajikistan

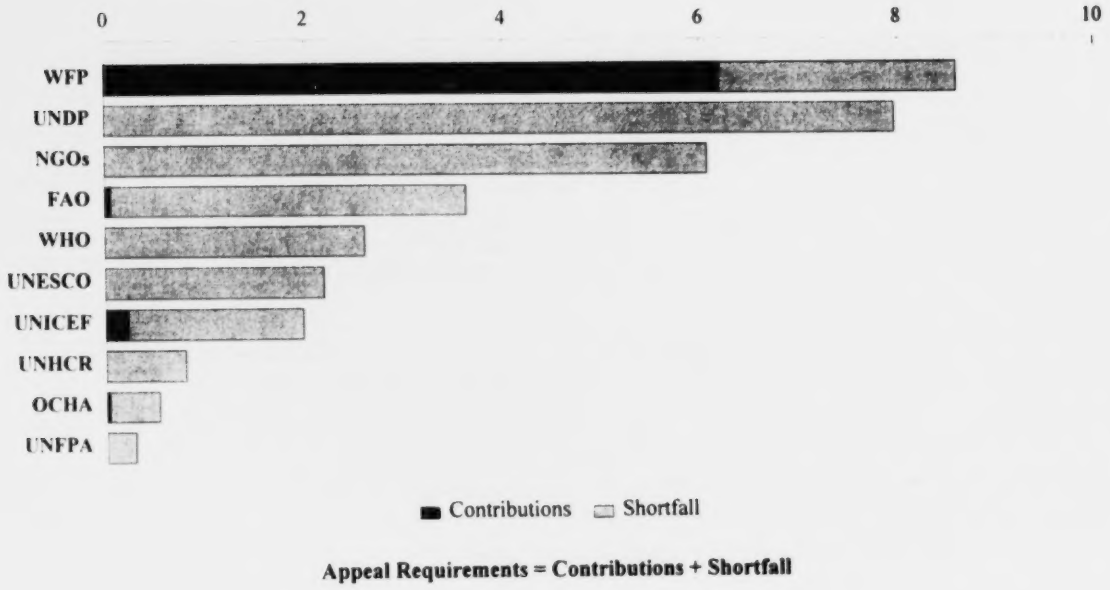
(In United States dollars)

Appealing agency	*Appeal requirements (1998)*	*Pledges contributions*	*Shortfall*	*Percentage of needs covered*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	3 626 150	56 000	3 570 150	1.5
United Nations Children's Fund	1 975 000	222 039	1 752 961	11.2
United Nations Development Programme	7 970 000	0	7 970 000	0.0
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	2 185 000	0	2 185 000	0.0
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	800 000	0	800 000	0.0
United Nations Population Fund	291 000	0	291 000	0.0
World Health Organization	2 596 100	0	2 596 100	0.0
World Food Programme	8 597 178	6 197 143	2 400 035	72.1
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	529 214	30 822	498 392	5.8
Non-governmental organizations	6 070 972	0	6 070 972	0.0
Grand total	**34 640 614**	**6 506 004**	**28 134 610**	**18.8**

Compiled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing agencies.

B. Updated financial summary

(In millions of United States dollars)



Appeal Requirements = Contributions + Shortfall

Table II
Donor contributions, as at 27 July 1998, towards the 1998 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Tajikistan

A. Non-food aid

Donor	*Channel*	*Project code*	*Sector (activity)*	*Amount (United States dollars)*
Belgium	UNICEF	TJK-98-1/N17	Provision of essential life-saving drugs and medical supplies to community health centres	65 789
Sweden	UNICEF	TJK-98-1/N27	Upgrading water and sanitation facilities in schools and providing training in maintenance and proper sanitation and hygiene practices	156 250
Switzerland	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	TJK-98-1/N39	Coordination	30 822
FAO	UNDP	TJK-98-1/N05	Programming and project formulation mission: public and private veterinary services for enhanced food security, public health and trade in Tajikistan	56 000
Total non-food (part A)				**308 861**

B. Food aid

Donor	*Channel*	*Project code*	*Commodity*	*Food (metric tons)*	*Amount (United States dollars)*
United States of America[a]	WFP	TJK-98-1/N01	Wheat flour	7 500	3 525 000
United States of America[a]	WFP	TJK-98-1/N01	Vegetable oil	500	615 000
ECHO[a]	WFP	TJK-98-1/N01	Various	*To be provided*	2 057 143
Total food aid (part B)				**8 000**	**6 197 143**
Grand total				**8 000**	**6 506 004**

Compiled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing agencies.

[a] As reported by donor to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Table III

Listing of project activities, as at 27 July 1998, towards the 1998 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Tajikistan

(In United States dollars)

Code	*Sector activity*	*Appealing agency*	*Requirements*	*Income*	*Shortfall*
Food aid/food security					
N01	Emergency assistance to vulnerable groups	WFP	8 597 178	6 197 143	2 400 035
N02	Support to small farmer organizations in the Khatlon region – technical support to WFP land-lease project	ACTED	473 000	0	473 000
	Subtotal		**9 070 178**	**6 197 143**	**2 873 035**
Agriculture					
N03	Emergency supply of inputs for 1998 winter wheat planting	FAO	2 417 150	0	2 417 150
N04	Irrigation sector review and emergency rehabilitation	FAO	1 153 000	0	1 153 000
N05	Programming and project formulation mission: public and private veterinary services for enhanced food security, public health and trade in Tajikistan	FAO	56 000	56 000	0
N06	Provision of agricultural inputs and training to female-headed and multi-children families	Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)-I	299 513	0	299 513
N07	Zerafshan valley private farmer support project: potato-seed production and rehabilitation of irrigation systems in Old Mastchoh district	CARE-I	1 648 035	0	1 648 035
N08	Khatlon community livestock restocking and privatization project	Relief International (RI)	250 500	0	250 500
	Subtotal		**5 824 198**	**56 000**	**5 768 198**
Health					
N09	Health-care system reform assistance for Tajikistan	WHO	350 000	0	350 000
N10	Health coordination and management	WHO	411 100	0	411 100
N11	Managing supplies of essential drugs for Tajikistan	WHO	140 000	0	140 000
N12	Improving maternal and child health-care services at regional (oblast) level (consolidation of outcomes achieved in the CARAK project)	WHO	300 000	0	300 000
N13	Control and prevention of vector-borne diseases, including malaria	WHO	350 000	0	350 000
N14	Control and treatment of tuberculosis	WHO	510 000	0	510 000
N15	Control of diarrhoeal diseases including typhoid fever	WHO	370 000	0	370 000
N16	Emergency assistance and policy development in mental health rehabilitation and promotion	WHO	165 000	0	165 000
N17	Provision of essential life-saving drugs and medical supplies to community health centres	UNICEF	300 000	65 789	234 211
N18	Provision of iron tablets to women, adolescent girls and children to combat anaemia, and distribution of high-energy biscuits to supplement the diet of schoolchildren in disadvantaged and mountainous areas	UNICEF	890 000	0	890 000
N19	Rehabilitation and re-equipment of rural hospitals in Tajikistan	UNDP	4 190 000	0	4 190 000
N20	Malaria prevention through local rural organizations	ACTED	400 000	0	400 000
N21	Reproductive and child health	CARE-I	543 814	0	543 814

Code	*Sector activity*	*Appealing agency*	*Requirements*	*Income*	*Shortfall*
N22	Improving malaria management and control	Medical Emergency Relief International	549 680	0	549 680
N23	Support to mental health institutions	Médecins sans frontières-Holland	720 000	0	720 000
N24	Production of perfusion fluids in Tajikistan and distribution into the medical structures in Tajikistan	Pharmaciens sans frontières	436 000	0	436 000
N25	Pilot women's reproductive health intervention and community education	RI	111 000	0	111 000
N26	Garm and Khatlon first aid/obstetrical station support through capacity-building and institutionalizing teacher-training courses at the Post-Graduate Institute for Health Training (Dushanbe) for first aid station/obstetrical staff	RI	230 100	0	230 100
	Subtotal		**10 966 694**	**65 789**	**10 900 905**
Water and sanitation					
N27	Upgrading water and sanitation facilities in schools and training in maintenance and proper sanitation and hygiene practices	UNICEF	425 000	156 250	268 750
N28	Provision of slow filtration sand filters and water-related health education to 50 institutions accommodating vulnerable persons such as children, the sick and the elderly	ADRA-I	57 000	0	57 000
	Subtotal		**482 000**	**156 250**	**325 750**
Education					
N29	Radio-education project with diffusion of printed materials	UNESCO	1 085 000	0	1 085 000
N30	Repair of schools and production of school furniture	UNESCO	1 100 000	0	1 100 000
N31	Provision of education kits for primary schools and paper for printing of essential primary-level textbooks	UNICEF	360 000	0	360 000
N32	Rehabilitation, provision of education materials and training to rural primary and secondary schools in Tajikistan	UNDP	3 780 000	0	3 780 000
N33	Pilot peace/tolerance education through textbook production	RI	49 500	0	49 500
	Subtotal		**6 374 500**	**0**	**6 374 500**
Income generation					
N34	Support to micro-enterprise quick impact projects in returnee affected areas in Khatlon district	UNHCR	800 000	0	800 000
N35	Provision of loans to female partners in group contracts to initiate local employment and income-generating activities	ADRA-I	60 830	0	60 830
N36	Provision of heating fuel to social institutions in winter 1998/99	German Agro Action	215 000	0	215 000
N37	Vocational training and small business promotion for social orphans in Kulyab	Orphans, Refugees and Aid	27 000	0	27 000
	Subtotal		**1 102 830**	**0**	**1 102 830**

Code	*Sector activity*	*Appealing agency*	*Requirements*	*Income*	*Shortfall*
Information management and coordination					
N38	Data collection	UNFPA	291 000	0	291 000
N39	Coordination	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	529 214	30 822	498 392
	Subtotal		**820 214**	**30 822**	**789 392**
	Total		**34 640 614**	**6 506 004**	**28 134 610**

Table IV

Pledges/contributions of the international community towards humanitarian assistance for Tajikistan in 1998, outside the framework of the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal, as at 28 July 1998

Decision date	*Donor*	*Channel*	*Description*	*Value (United States dollars)*
30 June 1998	Denmark	ICRC	Cash for humanitarian assistance (ICRC emergency appeal)	298 649
20 March 1998	Denmark	Mission east	Cash for pre-harvest food distribution in Kulyab province (southern Tajikistan) [46 H 7-11]	817 518
Subtotal				**1 116 167**
4 May 1998	Egypt	Egyptian fund for technical cooperation with CIS and newly independent States	In kind – medicine and medical equipment	**100 000**
30 March 1998	Finland	RC/Finland	Cash for humanitarian assistance	366 300
30 March 1998	Finland	RC/Finland	Cash for humanitarian assistance	366 300
Subtotal				**732 600**
7 May 1998	Germany	German embassy	Cash for logistics and operational support for children, elderly and women victims of flood disaster and landslides (ASHH 321 50)	3 056
18 June 1998	Germany	German embassy	Cash to clear the area of broken-down houses as a result of flooding after heavy rainfalls in Tavildara, Tajikistan (ASHH 321 50 TJK 05/98)	3 056
2 June 1998	Germany	RC/Germany	Cash for immediate relief for homeless people because of floods after heavy rainfalls (ASHH 321 50 TJK 04/98)	111 111
Subtotal				**117 223**
30 June 1998	Luxembourg	ICRC	Cash for humanitarian assistance (ICRC emergency appeal)	**110 811**
20 March 1998	Netherlands	ICRC	Cash for ICRC emergency appeal 1998: health activities, protection, dissemination/information and relief activities in Tajikistan (TJ004001)	**371 287**
1 April 1998	Norway	RC/Norway	In kind – soup kitchen (K8240)	30 818
1 April 1998	Norway	UNDP	Cash for open trust fund for peace and development (K8285)	507 327
Subtotal				**538 145**
30 June 1998	Sweden	ICRC	Cash for humanitarian assistance (ICRC emergency appeal)	508 476
1 April 1998	United Kingdom	Aga Khan Foundation	Cash to provide 1,500 tons of wheat flour to vulnerable population of approximately 250,000 in Gorno-Badakshan	1 000 000

Decision date	*Donor*	*Channel*	*Description*	*Value (United States dollars)*
26 February 1998	United Kingdom (N/A)	United Nations Development Fund for Women/UNDP	Cash to enhance national/international capacity to provide development assistance to women in crisis and post-crisis situations through advocacy, education and awareness raising, addressing psychosocial rehabilitation needs and support to mainstream gender within Tajikistan's strategic framework in Dushanbe	166 667
Subtotal				**1 166 667**
15 May 1998	United States	Ambassador's authority	Cash for humanitarian assistance (Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance fiscal year 1998 assistance)	25 000
20 May 1998	United States	Ambassador's authority	Cash for humanitarian assistance (Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance fiscal year 1998 assistance)	25 000
Subtotal				**50 000**
21 April 1998	ECHO	ACTED/France	Cash for partial rehabilitation of destroyed houses, schools and medical facilities, monitoring and coordination of ECHO assistance, supply of coal to institutions (part of ECU 875,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0100]	205 714
21 April 1998	ECHO	Aga Khan Foundation	Cash for complementary food assistance for most vulnerable people: wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt throughout the country (part of ECU 5,780,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0300]	514 286
21 April 1998	ECHO	Caritas/Switzerland	Cash for partial rehabilitation of destroyed houses, schools and medical facilities, monitoring and coordination of ECHO assistance, supply of coal to institutions (part of ECU 875,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0100]	680 000
21 April 1998	ECHO	ECHO Correspondent	Cash for partial rehabilitation of destroyed houses, schools and medical facilities, monitoring and coordination of ECHO assistance, supply of coal to institutions (part of ECU 875,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0100]	114 286
21 April 1998	ECHO	German Agro Action	Cash for complementary food assistance for most vulnerable people: wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt throughout the country (part of ECU 5,780,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0300]	2 800 000
31 March 1998	ECHO	ICRC	Cash for ICRC emergency appeal 1998	483 286
26 May 1998	ECHO	IFRC	Cash for distribution of emergency relief items for most affected people of floods and landslide (part of ECU 200,000) [ECHO/TJK/215/1998/02000]	219 780
21 April 1998	ECHO	Médecins sans frontières/France	Cash for medical assistance for most vulnerable people through selected medical structures in Leninabad, Dushanbe, Khatlon and Garm (part of ECU 2,345,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215797/0100]	194 286
21 April 1998	ECHO	Medical Emergency Relief International/UK	Cash for medical assistance for most vulnerable people through selected medical structures in Leninabad, Dushanbe, Khatlon and Garm (part of ECU 2,345,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215797/0100]	657 143

Decision date	*Donor*	*Channel*	*Description*	*Value (United States dollars)*
21 April 1998	ECHO	Pharmaciens sans frontières/France	Cash for medical assistance for most vulnerable people through selected medical structures in Leninabad, Dushanbe, Khatlon and Garm (part of ECU 2,345,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215797/0100]	1 142 857
21 April 1998	ECHO	RC/Finland	Cash for complementary food assistance for most vulnerable people: wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt throughout the country (part of ECU 5,780,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0300]	240 000
21 April 1998	ECHO	RC/Netherlands	Cash for medical assistance for most vulnerable people through selected medical structures in Leninabad, Dushanbe, Khatlon and Garm (part of ECU 2,345,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215797/0100]	685 714
21 April 1998	ECHO	RC/Sweden	Cash for complementary food assistance for most vulnerable people: wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt throughout the country (part of ECU 5,780,000) [ECHO/TJK/B7-215/97/0300]	994 286
Subtotal				**8 931 638**
30 June 1998	Others	ICRC	Cash for humanitarian assistance (ICRC emergency appeal)	**64 637**
Total				**13 807 651**

This table is comprehensive to the extent that decisions have been reported to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs by donors.